



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1501**

February 19, 2021

Jennifer A. Hemingway  
Acting Chair, Capitol Police Board  
Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper  
U.S. Senate  
U.S. Capitol, Room S-151  
Washington, DC 20510

Timothy Blodgett  
Member, Capitol Police Board  
Acting Sergeant at Arms  
U.S. House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol, Room H-124  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable J. Brett Blanton  
Member, Capitol Police Board  
Architect of the Capitol  
U.S. Capitol, Room SB-16  
Washington, DC 20515

Yogananda Pittman  
Ex-Officio Member, Capitol Police Board  
Acting Chief of Police, U.S. Capitol Police  
119 D Street NE  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Members of the Capitol Police Board:

I request that the public have access to the outdoor spaces of the U.S. Botanic Garden that remained open to the public after COVID-19 restrictions were instituted at the U.S. Capitol complex but were closed after the attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021. Even if security concerns justify the current temporary fencing around the Capitol and the surrounding office buildings, the outdoor spaces of the Botanic Garden are far enough from such buildings that there would seem to be no security justification for keeping them closed to District of Columbia residents and visitors.

As you know, I have introduced legislation to prohibit the installation of permanent fencing at the Capitol complex and want the temporary fencing to be removed as soon as possible. Fencing sends the wrong message to the nation and the world about our ability to protect the Capitol and transforms our democracy from one that is accessible and of the people to one that is exclusive and fearful of its citizens. In addition, the Capitol complex is immediately surrounded by residential neighborhoods. The outdoor spaces in the Capitol complex have always been used by neighbors for recreation and relaxation. Such spaces are in limited supply in the District and are even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**MAIN DISTRICT OFFICE**

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Please provide a written response to this letter by March 4, 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eleanor H. Norton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "E" and "N".

Eleanor Holmes Norton